

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-1-58-23

Issued at Soldotna: Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, August 16, 2023

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 31, 2023, unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes emergency order 2-KS-1-51-23 that prohibited the use of bait and restricted sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure while sport fishing in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake through August 15, 2023 and extends these restrictions through August 31, 2023.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 57.121(1)(B) is superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, August 16 through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 31, 2023.

5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

(1) sport fishing gear restrictions:

(B) from August 16 – August 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Doug Vincent-Lang,
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Matt Miller

Matt G Miller

Fish and Game Coordinator

JUSTIFICATION:

The optimal escapement goal (OEG) for Kenai River late-run king salmon is 15,000 – 30,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer. In 2023, the king salmon runs to the Kenai River have significantly underperformed preseason expectations resulting in restrictions and closures of inriver and marine sport fisheries. Through August 13, 2023, approximately 12,045 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer have passed the river mile 13.7 king salmon sonar. Inseason projections estimate the run will not achieve the OEG. General regulations for the Kenai River drainage downstream of Skilak Lake allow the use of bait and multiple hooks beginning August 1. Historically late-run king salmon continue to enter the Kenai River during early August while inriver anglers are targeting coho salmon stocks. To reduce the mortality of king salmon inriver it is warranted to remove bait and multiple hooks from the sport fishery at this time.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order 2-KS-1-51-23 issued Thursday, July 27, 2023, prohibited the use of bait and restricted sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure while sport fishing in the Kenai River from its mouth

upstream to the outlet of Skilak Lake. This emergency order supersedes EO 2-KS-1-51-23 and extends the bait prohibition and gear restriction through 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 31, 2023.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region 2 Office of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.